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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/629,550	07/30/2003	Shinji Nezu	240462US2	6520

22850 7590 05/18/2006

OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.
1940 DUKE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

MARTIN, ANGELA J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1745

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/629,550

Applicant(s)

NEZU ET AL.

Examiner

Angela J. Martin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 March 2006.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3 and 5-20 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is responsive to the Amendment filed on March 1, 2006. The Applicant has amended claims 1 and 18; canceled claim 4; and added new claim 20. However, a new rejection is presented for the following reasons of record.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-3, 5-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tanaka et al., JP 06-103992 (machine translation), in view of Yamada et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,805,985 B2 or Cisar et al., U.S. Pat. No. 6,838,205 B2 or Fowler et al., U.S. Pat. Application Pub. 2004/0185323 A1.

Rejection of claims 1-3, 5-17, 20 drawn to a fuel cell; claims 18, 19 drawn to a method for controlling a fuel cell.

Tanaka et al., teach a fuel cell (abstract) comprising an electrolyte comprising a proton conductor (sect. 0002) and an ion exchange membrane (abstract), a fuel electrode (sect. 0002), an oxidant electrode (sect. 0002), an internal electrode (sect. 0011), and an electric voltage application means (sect. 0017). It teaches single layer of internal electrode (Fig. 3). It teaches plurality of layers of internal electrode (sect. 0012). It teaches catalysts on supports (abstract). It teaches collectors (substrates) (sect.

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0005). It teaches the method for controlling the above-described fuel cell (sect. 0013-0015).

Tanaka et al., do not teach potentiostat between internal electrode and fuel or oxidant electrode; do not teach an electric voltage application means.

Yamada et al., teach an electric voltage application means and the electric voltage application means is electrically connected to the internal electrode (abstract; col. 1, lines 40-48). Cisar et al., teach an electric voltage application means and the electric voltage application means is electrically connected to the internal electrode (col. 1, lines 21-32). Fowler et al., teach an electric voltage application means the electric voltage application means is electrically connected to the internal electrode (sect. 0004).

Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to insert the teachings of Yamada et al., or Cisar et al., or Fowler et al., into the teachings of Tanaka et al., because although Tanaka et al., does not specifically describe the location of the potentiostat, sect. 0015 recites “electrical potential difference was measured...” which could be measured via a potentiostat. In addition, Yamada et al., Cisar et al., and Fowler et al., each teach an electric voltage application means. “In operation, a cell is connected to an external load or to an external voltage source, and electrons transfer electric charge between the anode and the cathode through the external circuit.” (Cisar et al., col. 1, lines 21-32).

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to above claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Angela J. Martin whose telephone number is 571-272-1288. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


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